Hindrance in development works due to Forest Conservation Act, 1980

480. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether road construction and other various schemes have come to a stand still in tribal and forest areas of the country after the enforcement of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to provide any special relaxation to start developmental works under Government schemes;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether Government have received any proposal from the State Government in this regard during the last two years and the current year; and

(f) if so, the action taken or being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has granted general approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 on 3.1.2005 to the State/Union Territory Governments for diversion of forest land, less than one hectare in each case, for the following developmental activities to be implemented by Government Departments–

1. School;
2. Dispensary/Hospital;
3. Electric and telecommunication line;
4. Drinking water;
5. Water/rainwater harvesting structure;
6. Minor irrigation canal;
7. Non-conventional source of energy;

8. Skill up-gradatin/vocational training centre;

9. Power sub-station;

10. Communication post; and

11. Police establishments like police station/outpost/border outpost/ watch tower in sensitive areas (identified by Ministry of Home Affairs).

This general approval was valid upto 31.12.2006. The Government of India has recently promulgated 'The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recongnition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006', which provides, inter-alia, for diversion of forest land for many such activities, notwithstanding anything contained in the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

(e) and (f) During the last two years and the current year, i.e. from 1.01.2005 to 26.02.2007, 981 proposals for various developmental works, including 575 for roads, have been received in the Ministry of Environment and Forests from the State/Union Territory Governments for diversion of forest land under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Out of this, 702 proposals, including 424 for roads, have been approved.

Heating up of the earth

481. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the earth is heating up;

(b) if so, how Indian coastal area would be affected due to this;

(c) the rise in sea level expected and what shall be its adverse effects on agricultural production and population;

(d) how far the Gangotri and Pindari Himalayan Glaciers have receded during the last 10 years and its adverse on Himalayan rivers; and

(e) the efforts being made by Government for the protection of the population in all respects and when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes Sir. As per reports of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) global average air and ocean temperatures are increasing.